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The purpose of this study was to explore a social-psychological aspect of mobility-levels of aspiration. The investigation centered on the relationship between aspirations of high school seniors and the social status of their parents, the extent to which children remain in the same social status as their parents and to what extent they rise or fall in status. Answers were sought by the following questions: What are the levels of aspiration of adolescents located at different status levels? How are attitudes and values of parents and the children related? What relationships exist between aspirations and achievements? The subjects of the study were 98 seniors of Trenton High School class of 1956 and their parents. The 1960 seniors were also included but not their parents. Data were collected from school records, yearbooks, school papers, and interviews. The findings revealed evidence of upward social mobility and contain implications for use by educational and vocational guidance counselors. A related document is VT 003 811. (CH)

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# THE NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE COLLEGE STUDIES

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EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, PART I

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# THE NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE COLLEGE STUDIES

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# EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS[1]

## PART I

JAMES L. LOWE, *Ph.D.*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study is concerned with certain aspects of intergenerational social mobility. To what extent do children remain in the same social status as their parents and to what extent do they rise or fall in status? How is social mobility or the lack of mobility explained? The purpose in this study is to explore a social-psychological aspect of mobility—levels of aspiration. The investigation is centered on a study of the relationship between aspirations of high school seniors and the social status of their parents. Attempts will be made to find answers for the following questions: What are the levels of aspiration of adolescents located at different status levels? How are attitudes and values of parents and children related? What relationships exist between aspirations and achievements?[2]

In any scientific study, theory should guide the investigation.

1. This publication consists of the body of the dissertation "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of High School Seniors" by James L. Lowe and was presented to the Department of Sociology, University of Missouri, 1962, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology. It will be published in two parts.

The superintendent of schools, S. M. Rissler, and the high school principal, E. D. Geyer, at Trenton, Missouri, were most cooperative in permitting the study to be conducted in the Trenton school system. Mr. C. F. Russell, Guidance Director, supplied valuable scholastic information about the students. The author also wishes to express his deep appreciation to the Trenton seniors of the 1956 and 1960 classes and the parents of the 1956 class who provided the data for this investigation.

2. An extensive literature on educational and occupational aspirations is accumulating. However, a review of the published studies in this area will not be made in this report. Interested persons may consult the numerous articles which have appeared in sociological journals. The strong interest now prevalent can be noted by the fact that three sectional meetings at the American Sociological Association meetings in Los Angeles, California, August 26-28, 1963, were devoted to this subject.

In sociology, general theory is still in an undeveloped state. Some generalizations, however, concerning stratification and social class can be found in sociological literature. It is proposed to discuss general principles of stratification and then from these generalizations, specific propositions in the nature of hypotheses will be deduced for testing. These propositions will relate the independent variable, social status, to the dependent variables, attitudes and values of parents and aspirations and achievements of children.

*Principle Number 1*: All societies are stratified. It seems to be universally accepted by sociologists that all human societies are stratified.[3] Variation exists in the degree of stratification. Small simple societies are not differentiated as are the modern industrial societies, but even in the most primitive societies certain roles are evaluated and ranked as superior and inferior. Where societies develop more complex economic and social organization, there tends to be greater stratification. Groups of people occupy about the same social and economic positions in the society. Stratification may vary from an approximation of a caste system to an open class system.

*Principle Number 2*: The various strata develop ways of life appropriate to their positions or level in the society. In more rigid societies, the position in the social structure may be designated officially and legally by certain marks or signs which individuals may wear or exhibit. In more open societies, the distinctions may be less obvious and more subtle. The strata vary not only in their physical possessions such as homes, furniture and clothes but also in language, customs, and attitudes. Living under different conditions, persons in these strata develop different "styles of life."

*Principle Number 3*: Primary groups, particularly the family, are important in transmitting to children the attitudes, values, and understandings of the society. In all societies the socialization of children is in large part the function of the family. Family organization may vary in different societies, but everywhere children to some extent are under the control and direction of the family, especially during the first years of life. As societies become more com-

3. While there is agreement that societies are stratified there is disagreement and controversy over the nature of stratification. There are differences of opinion with regard to theories of stratification and methods of investigation. Some questions involved are these: Is stratification a continuum or are there discrete classes? Is stratification uni-dimensional? Can stratification be analyzed and explained best by a functional approach or by some other means?

plex, special organizations are usually instituted to train children for their places in the larger society. Schools thus become significant influences in shaping young people's lives. The adolescent peer group also seems to play a part in the formation of attitudes and values.

*Principle Number 4*: Social mobility exists more or less in all societies. In a caste society very little social mobility occurs. A person's place is fairly well fixed for life, but some movement takes place. In open-class societies considerable movement between strata occurs. Upward mobility may be possible through channels of religious, military, and political institutions. In a modern industrialized society, economic and educational institutions offer opportunities for mobility.

*Principle Number 5*: Individuals in different social strata are presumably differentially motivated to assume higher status roles in the society. Higher status roles tend to be filled in greater proportions by persons whose parents occupy higher positions in the societal hierarchy. Some positions are filled by ascription. The son of a king succeeds to the kingship. Other positions can be achieved through individual effort. The social position of the family into which one is born influences the position to which one aspires and reaches as well as opportunities for realizing them.

Having discussed general principles of stratification, we now propose to formulate specific hypotheses or propositions for testing. If societies are stratified, it is logical to believe that parents in higher status positions are able to give their children greater advantages and opportunities. The parents should have some understanding of their positions and of the channels of mobility. Therefore, these parents' behavior would be directed toward raising the social status of their children or at least toward seeing that it was not lowered. The higher status parents would know the importance of education for social mobility in an industrialized, technical society and would have the means to provide higher education for their children.

The following propositions relating to parents will be tested.

Proposition 1. Parents at higher socio-economic levels will take a greater interest in the school progress of their children than parents on lower levels.

Proposition 2. Parents in higher socio-economic categories will be more positive in encouraging their chil-

dren to attend college than parents in lower social categories.

Proposition 3. Parents at higher status levels will expect their children to enter higher status occupations.

If societies are stratified and the motives, attitudes, and values are transmitted by parents to children, the following general hypothesis will logically follow: *Educational and occupational aspirations of high school seniors are related to the social status of their parents.*

In light of this general hypothesis, children of parents in higher status occupations would be expected to acquire the general viewpoints of their parents. Their aspirations with regard to education and occupations should be higher than those of children at lower levels. Children on lower socio-economic levels would be more limited in their outlook and in their aspirations. It would be expected that achievements of children at the higher levels would be greater than those at lower levels.

Specific propositions drawn from the general principles can be stated further as follows:

Proposition 4. The proportion of high school seniors aspiring to attend college increases as the socio-economic status of their parents goes up.

Proposition 5. The proportion of students aspiring to higher occupations increases with higher socio-economic status of parents.

Proposition 6. Students in lower socio-economic groups will be more undecided as to their educational and occupational aspirations than those in higher socio-economic groups.

Proposition 7. The difference between aspirations and expectations is greater in the lower socio-economic levels.

Proposition 8. Students at higher status levels will receive higher grades and participate more in school activities than students at lower status levels.

Proposition 9. The proportion of high school seniors who attend college increases as the socio-economic status goes up.

## 2. Procedures

It was decided to include in the study all seniors in one high school in the school year 1955-1956 and their parents. Later the seniors from the same school in the graduating class of 1960 were added to the investigation. Two interview schedules covering the areas of interest were prepared. One schedule of eight pages was prepared for students and a shorter one of three pages was designed for the parents.

In most instances the students were interviewed at school during study hall periods. A few seniors were interviewed before the school year began as they came to school to enroll. Two boys were visited in their own homes. Almost all parents were questioned in their own homes although three parents came to the writer's home for this purpose.

Data were also collected from school records, year books, and school papers. In some instances English themes of an autobiographical nature were obtained from the English teacher. There was also occasion to observe and talk with the students during the school year. A file which included interview material, school records, and other information was maintained on each student.

Because of the small number in the senior class of 1956 and especially in the semi-skilled and unskilled category, it was later decided to have the senior class of 1960 complete the schedule form as a questionnaire in order to augment the number in the sample. It was realized that there might be some variation in replies given in an interview and answers written on a printed form. However, it was believed that the results would be substantially the same. The parents of the 1960 class were not interviewed.

## DESCRIPTION OF SETTING AND SUBJECTS

Trenton, the county seat of Grundy County, is located in north central Missouri about forty miles from the Iowa line. Grundy County was organized in 1841, after having been a part of other counties. Trenton was incorporated in 1857 by an act of the state legislature although it had been the county seat under a different name since the organization of the county. A centennial celebration was held in 1957 to observe the one hundredth birthday of Trenton.

Trenton grew slowly in population until the coming of railroad in 1871. In 1870, the number of people living in Trenton was 945, but in the next decade the number rapidly increased to 3,370. In 1890, the population was 5,039 and in 1900, 5,396. In the Twentieth Century, Trenton grew slowly, reaching a high point in 1940. In the decade, 1940 to 1950, the trend was reversed and Trenton lost population. Except for two ten year periods, Grundy County lost population during the present century.[4] Table 1 shows the trends in population of Trenton and Grundy County by decades from 1910 to 1960.

TABLE 1

POPULATION OF TRENTON AND GRUNDY COUNTY, MISSOURI, BY DECADES, 1910-1960

| | 1960 | 1950 | 1940 | 1930 | 1920 | 1910 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trenton | 6,257 | 6,157 | 7,046 | 6,992 | 6,951 | 5,656 |
| Grundy County | 12,152 | 13,220 | 15,716 | 16,135 | 17,554 | 16,744 |

Along with the decline in population, there has been a decrease in the number of farms in Grundy County. Farms numbered 2,007 in 1910 and only 1,569 in 1950. Farms are well mechanized, and the rural levels of living fairly high.[5]

Principal crops are corn, soybeans, and hay with wheat, rye, and barley also being grown. Dairy and beef herds are present in fairly large numbers along with some sheep, swine, and chickens.[6]

Of the variety of employment opportunities available to the populace of Trenton, the railroad is a major employer maintaining a sub-district office here. An assistant superintendent, dispatchers, ticket and freight agents, operating personnel, and service maintenance crews make their homes in Trenton. When a roundhouse which was maintained here was abandoned some years ago, the result was

4. William Ray Denslow, *Centennial History of Grundy County, 1839-1939*, (Trenton, Missouri, 1939), p. 41; James Everett Ford, *A History of Grundy County* (Trenton, Missouri, 1908) pp. 13, 118; Robert L. McNamara, Peter New Donnell Pappenfort, *Rural-Urban Population Change in Missouri 1940-1950*, Bulletin 620, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Missouri, Columbia, p. 20; Trenton *Republican Times*, June 27, 1960.
5. McNamara, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 27.
6. Denslow, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

not only the elimination of jobs for several hundred men, but also a loss to the community as a whole.

A food canning and processing plant employs from 300 to 400 persons who are recruited from Trenton and the surrounding rural area and from other nearby communities. A smaller company purchases milk for the processing of butter and dehydrated milk. A fertilizer mixing plant operated for a time, but after merging with another concern, the mixing operations ceased and the building now serves as a warehouse for fertilizer.

Trenton is a center for supplying goods and services to the adjacent area. A few wholesale houses and numerous retail stores provide employment for a number of persons. The public utilities—electricity, gas, water, and telephone—must be staffed. Federal and state agencies as well as local government offices give work to a considerable number of people. Professions are represented by doctors, lawyers, ministers, nurses, and teachers. Thus, the town and adjacent rural area with a rather broad representation of occupational groups provides an apt locale for studying aspirations of parents and children.

The subjects of the study were the 1956 seniors of Trenton High School and their parents. The 1960 seniors were also included but not their parents. The 1956 students comprised ninety-eight young people who were classified as seniors for the academic year 1955-1956; fifty were male and forty-eight were female. Two boys would have graduated in the year previous except that one boy was out of school one semester and the other boy failed a course. One boy did not graduate in May, 1956, because he failed a course. He continued in school in the 1956-1957 academic year and received his diploma. One boy dropped out of school during the year and did not graduate. A girl who was married in the first part of the senior year attended school the first semester but withdrew at the beginning of the second semester. Another female student who lived in Trenton during her elementary school years attended a private high school in another community but returned to Trenton for the second semester of her senior year. One boy and one girl moved to the community from another town to complete the senior year.

All 1956 seniors in the study were native-born, white Americans. The author knew of only one foreign-born student in the entire school system. Over half the students were born in Grundy

County, and about one-fifth were born in other counties in Missouri. One-fifth of the seniors' were not natives of Missouri.

Table 2 presents the location of birth of 1956 students by occupation of father. Place of birth seemed to be little affected by occupation and was not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.[7] Over 50 per cent of the youth at all levels were born in Grundy County. Children of skilled workers had the highest percentage born in Grundy County, followed by farmers, white collar, and semi-skilled. One might expect that children of farmers would be less likely to be born in other states. However, about as high percentage of farmers' children were born in other states as were any in the other categories.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1956 SENIORS BY PLACE OF BIRTH BY OCCUPATION OF FATHER

| Occupation of Father* | Grundy County | Mo. Counties Other than Grundy County | Other States | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 54 | 25 | 21 | 24 |
| Skilled | 64 | 13 | 23 | 22 |
| Farmers | 63 | 17 | 20 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 53 | 29 | 17 | 17 |
| Total | 59 | 20 | 20 | 98 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 2.094 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

* Occupational classification of fathers is explained later.

Almost all parents of the 1956 seniors were living at the time of the study. There were instances, however, in which the senior was not living with one or both parents. The father of one girl died previous to the investigation. During the school year one boy's father died before he was interviewed. Three seniors were living with one parent because of divorce or separation; a girl and a boy were living with their mothers; one boy was living with his father.

7. Through the courtesy of Prof. Cecil L. Gregory of the Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri, and Alex B. Willis of the Computer Research Center, University of Missouri, the values of chi square were obtained. In some instances it was not possible to compute chi square because of the small numbers involved.

Four students were living with their mothers and stepfathers with three of the latter being interviewed and included as fathers. Two seniors were being reared by aunts and uncles. Since the parents of one girl lived in Nebraska, no contact was made with them; the parents of the other girl were divorced and resided in other towns. No communication was had with these parents. The aunts and uncles were interviewed and included as parents.

One student was living with his grandparents who were included in the statistics as parents. The mother, divorced and remarried, lived in another community. In another case the mother and father were separated with the father residing in an adjoining state. Two children were adopted—one at a very young age, several weeks old, and another at a later age. Two sets of brothers were subjects in the study: one set were twins; the other set differed in age by a year.

Ninety-eight seniors of the 1956 class, fifty girls and forty-eight boys were included in the investigation. There were ninety-six mothers since there were two pairs of brothers, and all the mothers were interviewed. Only ninety-two fathers were interviewed—there were two pairs of brothers; two fathers were dead; one father lived in another state and was not contacted. Another father was not included although several attempts were made to speak with him.

Interviews with parents were then conducted as follows:

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS OF 1956 SENIORS

| | Fathers | Mothers | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Girls | 47 | 50 | 97 |
| Boys | 45 | 46 | 91 |
| Total | 92 | 96 | 188 |

Since broad groupings of occupations were used in stratifying the subjects of the study, it is appropriate to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such a procedure. There are serious limitations to the use of occupation as a measure of social class and social mobility. There is no agreement on how occupations are to be ranked

and categorized. Caplow, in discussing the problems involved, recognized that occupational position was an important factor in the determination of individual prestige and in the allocation of social privileges; however, he questioned the possibility of constructing a single dimensional rating of occupational status.[8] He asserted that some callings, such as salesmen and farmer, covered a wide range of status and could not be assigned to any one point. Occupations also differed in definiteness, and it was difficult to place or classify some vocations. Caplow analyzed a number of scales and pointed out the inconsistencies in the ratings; there was general agreement at the top and bottom but there was considerable inconsistency of rating in the middle occupations.

Reissman stated that the principal objection to the use of occupation as a measure of social class could be phrased by a question: What is the relationship between an occupational index and class? He contended that stratification studies did not face up to this question. Type of employment tended to be equated with social class; reference was made to social class but the data presented in support of conclusions depended upon some occupational measure. It was agreed that there was some relationship between vocation and hierarchies of stratification such as income, education, and life style, but the precise relationships have not been worked out. Occupations were not social classes.[9]

As a matter of actual practice, most social mobility studies use occupational status as a measure of social position. In the theories and methods of studying class which have been advanced, few have been conducive to the investigation of social mobility, and there are certain advantages in the use of occupations in mobility studies. According to Reissman, vocation has a social reality; it is a real category of social classification. Non-professionals as well as social scientists recognize mode of employment as an index of social position. Type of work is an indicator of other class characteristics, especially income and education, which in turn also reflect upon other class characteristics such as life styles and attitude patterns. Occupation occupies an important place in stratification theories which have been constructed by social scientists.

8. Theodore Caplow, *The Sociology of Work* (Minneapolis, 1954), pp. 30-37. Caplow listed three consecutive items on an occupational scale as "Hucksters, hunters, and hypnotists."

9. Leonard Reissman, *Class in American Society* (Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), pp. 160-164.

In methodology, using types of employment as class indicators has advantages. Occupations are objective and can be ascertained with directness and without difficulty. Vocation can be used within limits on comparisons through time and from place to place. Comparisons in life pursuits can be made between fathers and sons and between persons in different countries. Studies can be undertaken at the community level and at the national level and have meaning.[10]

In an effort to discover the relationship between nineteen indicators and indices of social status, Kahl and Davis by statistical means calculated the intercorrelation among nineteen different stratification measures. Relatively high positive correlations were found, and after continued statistical analysis, they concluded that two common factors accounted for most of the variance of the original indices: the first was occupation and the second consisted of ecological measures.[11]

Mayer stated that the use of occupational mobility as a measure of social mobility appeared to be justified since occupational status is closely related to amount and source of income, to education, and to prestige and authority; and occupational information is more precise and more available than other relevant data.[12]

The occupations of the fathers of the 1956 seniors were classified in categories as given in Table 4. In the professional classification were a doctor and a minister. One office manager was in the proprietor and manager category while the others fathers owned and operated businesses. In the clerical and sales classification were clerks (bookkeeper, parts man), sales persons (bulk gas, beer, tractor, hatchery, store, insurance), mail clerks, mail carriers, and conductors.

In the craftsmen category were railway engineers and firemen, brakemen, a welder, mechanics, electricians, a carpenter, and a radio-television repairman. There was one foreman.

10. Reisman, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-160. Reisman summarized his view by stating: "In short, the defense of occupational measures of class is almost unanimous and most formidable and impressive." p. 158.

11. Joseph A. Kahl and James A. Davis, "A Comparison of Indexes of Socio-Economic Status," *American Sociological Review*, 20 (June, 1955) pp. 317-325; also see John Haer, "Predictive Utility of Five Indices of Social Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, 22 (October, 1957), pp. 541-548.

12. Kurt B. Mayer, *Class and Society*, (New York, 1955), p. 69.

TABLE 4

CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS OF THE FATHERS OF 1956 SENIORS

| Occupational Classification | Number of Fathers | Interviewed |
|---|---|---|
| Professional | 2 | 2 |
| Proprietors and managers | 6 | 6 |
| Clerical and sales | 16 | 15 |
| Craftsmen and foremen | 21 | 20 |
| Farmers | 33 | 33 |
| Operatives and semi-skilled | 10 | 10 |
| Labor and farm labor | 6 | 6 |

Farmers included farm owners and farm renters. In the operatives and semi-skilled category were electric linemen, truck drivers, and factory workers. Labor and farm labor comprised section hand, rock quarry worker (retired), and dairy and milk plant workers. The widow of the deceased farmer resided on the farm but worked as a clerk in a store. The woman whose husband lived in another state and was classified as sales and clerical worked as an operative in a food processing plant.

In a few instances there was difficulty in assigning persons to occupational categories. Those persons who had been engaged in farming and then had taken other work were difficult to classify. Also some persons farmed and were employed at other jobs.

Several illustrations of problems in placing persons in occupational categories will be given. Mr. A. began work as a farm laborer in the 1920's. In 1941 when the war began, he went to Kansas City to work during the war years. In 1947 he purchased a farm on which he worked until 1953. In 1954 he moved to Trenton and operated a small service station. At the time of the study he stated that he had come to town to put his children through high school, that he preferred to farm and would return to his 120 acre farm when his children finished school. He was classified as a farmer.

Mr. B. worked as a farmer—either owned or rented a farm from 1932 to 1952. In 1952 he became manager of a service station. He stated that he "might end up on the farm again." He apparently preferred to live on a farm but perhaps because of economic condi-

tions had been forced off the farm. He was classified as a farmer.

Mr. C. farmed from 1935 to 1950. In 1950 he became a salesman, liked his work, and did not plan to return to the farm. He was classified as white collar.

Mr. D., who was reared on a farm, drove a tractor for the highway department for about seven years, and worked for a feed company for ten years. In 1946 he rented a farm and continued farming until about 1955. For several years he had worked in a salesbarn and lumber-yard in addition to farming. At the time of the study, he was not farming but was working in the barn and lumber-yard. He was classified in the semi-skilled category.

Mr. E. began work as a laborer for the Rock Island Railroad and then moved up to "machinist" in the roundhouse. When the roundhouse was eliminated, he refueled and serviced diesel engines. He was classified in the skilled category.

Because of the small numbers in some classifications, it was decided to combine the occupational categories in making the analysis of data. The combined classification of occupations as used in the study is listed in Table 5.

TABLE 5

CLASSIFICATION AND PERCENTAGE OF FATHERS (1956) IN EACH OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

| Occupational Classification | Fathers No. | Fathers % |
|---|---|---|
| White Collar | 23 | 25 |
| Professional | | |
| Proprietors and managers | | |
| Clerical and sales | | |
| Craftsmen and foremen (Skilled) | 20 | 21.7 |
| Farmers | 33 | 35.8 |
| Semi-skilled | 16 | 17.4 |
| Operatives | | |
| Labor | | |
| Farm labor | | |

The percentages in the occupational categories in Table 5 differ from the percentages in the national occupational classes. Particular-

ly to be noticed is the higher proportion of farmers than is found in the general population. With larger samples, it would have been possible to divide the white collar, craftsmen, and farmers into several subcategories.

In order to have a larger sample, the Trenton seniors of 1960 were included in the study. The seniors of 1956 and 1960 were classified into categories on the basis of their fathers' occupations. Table 6 presents the number and percentage of seniors in each classification by year and by both years combined. It was previously explained that the 1956 seniors were interviewed while the 1960 seniors filled out the schedule in a class meeting. Some 1960 seniors were absent from school on the day the questionnaire was administered, and a few completed forms were not usable; the responses for only eighty-one subjects were available for analysis.

TABLE 6

CLASSIFICATION OF 1956 AND 1960 SENIORS BY OCCUPATION OF FATHER

| Occupation Of Father | 1956 No. | % | 1960 No. | % | Total No. | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collor | 24 | 25 | 22 | 27 | 46 | 26 |
| Girls | 13 | | 15 | | 28 | |
| Boys | 11 | | 7 | | 18 | |
| Skilled | 22 | 22 | 26 | 32 | 48 | 27 |
| Girls | 12 | | 15 | | 27 | |
| Boys | 10 | | 11 | | 21 | |
| Farmers | 35 | 36 | 21 | 26 | 56 | 31 |
| Girls | 15 | | 9 | | 24 | |
| Boys | 20 | | 12 | | 32 | |
| Semi-skilled | 17 | 17 | 12 | 15 | 29 | 16 |
| Girls | 10 | | 5 | | 15 | |
| Boys | 7 | | 7 | | 14 | |

| 1956 | | 1960 | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Girls | 50 | Girls | 44 | Girls | 94 |
| Boys | 48 | Boys | 37 | Boys | 85 |
| | 98 | | 81 | | 179 |

The proportions at the white collar and semi-skilled levels for both years were about the same. The 1960 class had a larger percentage at the skilled level, and the 1956 class had a larger proportion at the farmer level. Overall, a little more than one-fourth of the students were in the white collar category and about the same in the skilled classification. Almost one-third of the students were farm youth, while about one-sixth were in the semi-skilled classification.

It is of interest to note the occupational level of the students' fathers' fathers—in others words, the seniors' grandfathers. Table 7 presents the occupational classification of the students' grandfathers. The differences in vocation between the seniors' fathers and grandfathers are significant at the 1 per cent level. The seniors' fathers originated in homes by socio-economic level not by chance but in relation to the type of work followed by the grandfathers.

As might be expected, the largest percentage of seniors' grandfathers in each occupational category originated in farm homes. It can be pointed out, however, that nearly one-third of the fathers in the white collar classification had fathers who were white collar workers. Almost none of the fathers in other categories came from white collar homes. None of the fathers classified as white collar had fathers engaged in semi-skilled or laboring work, 28 per cent came from homes of skilled workers.

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONS OF 1956 SENIORS' GRANDFATHERS

| Occupation of Senior's fathers | Occupations of seniors' grandfathers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White collar | Skilled | Farmer | Semi-skilled |
| White collar | 29 | 28 | 43 | 0 |
| Skilled | 0 | 39 | 51 | 10 |
| Farmer | 0 | 13 | 82 | 4 |
| Semi-skilled | 3 | 6 | 84 | 6 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 59.599 and is significant at the 1 per cent level.
Combined skilled and semi-skilled categories for computation.

A considerable number of the seniors' mothers regularly worked outside the home. Table 8 presents the proportions of 1956 seniors'

mothers who regularly worked outside the home. The largest percentage of the working women were wives of men in the semi-skilled category. Next in order were the wives of men in white collar work, farmers, and skilled workers. The overall differences are statistically significant at the 1 per cent level.

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1956 SENIORS' MOTHERS REGULARLY WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME

| Occupation of Husband | % | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White collar | 38 | 24 |
| Skilled | 14 | 21 |
| Farmers | 20 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 62 | 16 |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 12.774 and is significant at the 1 per cent level.

Most working wives in the white collar classification were employed in clerical or sales work. Other occupations included teacher, waitress, beautician, and operative in a food processing plant. In addition three other wives worked part time—two gave music lessons at home and one clerked in a retail store when needed on special occasions. If these three were added to the number working, the percentage would be fifty. One wife was separated from her husband and probably worked because of necessity.

Three wives of skilled workers were regularly employed; they worked as a waitress, hotel clerk, and clerk in a retail store. In addition two wives worked in retail stores when needed on special occasions. If these latter two were added to the working wives, the percentage working would be twenty-three. One woman in this group was divorced.

Seven wives of farmers were regularly employed outside the home. The jobs these women held were: waitress, tax collector and school bus driver, teacher, and saleswork.

Ten wives of men in the semi-skilled classification were working regularly. Two were clerks in retail stores; three worked as operatives in a food processing plant; one was a registered nurse; and

one acted as a practical nurse in a rest home for the aged. One wife was employed as a cook, and another operated a cafe.

In formal schooling the parents in the white collar category had considerable more years of education than other parents had. The parents at the upper level on the average had almost a high education (11.84 years). The semi-skilled had, on the average, almost a complete grade school education (7.97 years). Data concerning the education of parents of the 1956 seniors are given in Table 9. Differences in amount of education completed by parents by socio-economic level are statistically significant beyond the 1 per cent level. There was less than one chance in 100 that the differences in school were due to samplying or chance variation. Number of years of education completed was related to occupation of father.

TABLE 9

MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING OF 1956 SENIORS' PARENTS AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION COMPLETED BY PARENTS

| Occupation of father | Mean years of school | Percentage completing each level: Grade School | Some high sch. | Some College | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 11.84 | 17 | 52 | 31 | 48 |
| Fathers | 11.87 | 16 | 42 | 52 | 24 |
| Mothers | 11.81 | 16 | 63 | 21 | 24 |
| Skilled | 9.46 | 49 | 49 | 2 | 41 |
| Fathers | 8.95 | 65 | 35 | 0 | 20 |
| Mothers | 10.42 | 33 | 62 | 5 | 21 |
| Farmers | 9.99 | 44 | 46 | 10 | 70 |
| Fathers | 9.11 | 60 | 34 | 6 | 35 |
| Mothers | 10.82 | 29 | 57 | 14 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 7.97 | 75 | 22 | 3 | 32 |
| Fathers | 8.27 | 69 | 31 | 0 | 16 |
| Mothers | 7.68 | 81 | 13 | 6 | 16 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 39.386 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

The variation in education between fathers and mothers in the white collar and semi-skilled categories was slight—about one month for the former and more than one-half year for the latter. In both

instances the fathers averaged more education. In contrast, the mothers, among skilled workers and farmers, had more schooling than the fathers, and the differences were greater—nearly one and a half years more for the wives of skilled workers and nearly one and three-fourths year in favor of the farm wives.

In analyzing education of parents from the standpoint of percentage having grade school, some high school, and some college, the differences in amount of higher education are brought out more strikingly. The proportion of parents who received some college education was greater in the white collar category followed by the farmers, skilled and unskilled. Over half of the fathers and one-fifth of the mothers in the white collar classification had some college education. In all other categories, the mothers had more years of college training. Fourteen per cent of the farm women had been to college, or its equivalent, as compared with 6 per cent of the farm fathers. Only one mother among the skilled and one among the unskilled had college training or its equivalent, while no father in these two categories went beyond high school.

The greater amount of education among the mothers in the skilled category is shown by the fact that the mothers' education exceeded the fathers' in eleven instances while the fathers' education exceeded the mothers' in only two instances. The farm mothers had more education than their husbands in twenty-two out of thirty-five cases, while the fathers had more education in only four cases.

The setting for the study was a small city typical of many in the rural midwest where a declining population forced many young people to face a serious problem of finding employment.

The subjects of the investigation were homogeneous in race and nationality and consisted of high school seniors and their parents. The seniors of 1956 along with their parents were interviewed, and the seniors of 1960 filled out a questionnaire. The fathers of the students were stratified into broad occupational categories which were the basis for analyzing aspirations and attitudes of the subjects.

## ATTITUDES OF PARENTS: EDUCATION

Numerous scientific investigations as well as popular writings have attested to the influence of parents and home on adolescents. Sociologists have pointed to the family as the most important pri-

mary group in the socialization of children. Much stress has been placed on the influence of the family in child rearing.

If parents do influence their children, the attitude and values of parents toward education should have a bearing on the views of the children toward school and on their progress through school. It was deemed important to investigate the outlook of the parents toward education and to find out the hopes and plans of the adults for the education of their children.

Data were collected to test the following hypotheses or propositions concerning the parents:

1. Parents at higher socio-economic levels will take a greater interest in the school progress of their children than parents on lower levels.
2. Parents in higher social categories will be more positive in encouraging their children to attend college than parents in lower social categories.

An indication of the interest of parents in school and in the educational progress of their children may be membership in Parents and Teachers Association and attendance at meetings. The parents have an opportunity to meet with the high school teachers and discuss school problems. Opportunities are also afforded to meet informally with the teacher and to discuss the education of their children.

It is a common observation that membership in Parents and Teachers Association declines as the children reach the senior high school. Membership by those parents who do remain may be a more crucial test of parents' interest in the progress of their children. It may be pointed out that dues in the Parents and Teachers Association were low—fifty cents or less per person for a year, and hence were no obstacle to membership.

A question asked the parents of the 1956 seniors[13] was, "Are you a member of the school Parents and Teachers Association?" The responses are given in Table 10. Differences in membership in Parents and Teachers Association, by occupational class, are statistically significant beyond the 1 per cent level. A very high significance is represented by the value of chi square obtained. There is very little likelihood that the differences in membership are due to chance variation.

13. Data on attitudes of parents concern only the 1956 seniors and their parents.

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS OF 1956 SENIORS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF PARENTS-TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

| Occupation of Seniors' fathers | % | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White collar | 64 | 47 |
| Skilled | 39 | 41 |
| Farmers | 16 | 68 |
| Semi-skilled | 0 | 32 |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 46.814 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

Membership in the parents organization is related to socio-economic position. Nearly two-thirds of the white collar parents and more than one-third of the parents in the skilled category were members of the high school Parents and Teachers Association. Few farmers indicated that they joined the organization, and no parents at the semi-skilled level signified that they were members.

In order to learn of participation by parents, they were asked, "Did you attend any P.T.A. meetings last year?" Since many parents were contacted in the fall of the year, it was decided to inquire about the attendance at meetings for the previous year—the students' junior year in high school. The responses are given in Table 11. Attendance at Parents and Teachers Association meetings, by occupational class, is statistically significant beyond the 1 per cent level. The value of chi square in Table 11 is not quite so high as that in Table 10 but is very significant.

Attendance by parents at the faculty and school patrons organization is related to social status. The parents in the white collar category attended meetings in greater proportions than did other parents, followed by the parents in the skilled and farmer categories.

A comparison of Tables 10 and 11 reveals that a proportion of the parents in the white collar and skilled categories joined the Parents and Teachers Association but did not attend. These parents might send their membership dues by their children or pay it to the officers. If the farmers belonged to the parents' organization, they were likely to attend some meetings. The mothers and fathers in the

semi-skilled and laboring category neither belonged to the association nor attended its meetings.

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS ATTENDING ANY PARENTS AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION MEETING LAST YEAR

| Occupation | % | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White collar | 45 | 47 |
| Skilled | 29 | 41 |
| Farmers | 15 | 32 |
| Semi-skilled | 0 | 32 |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 25.682 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

It was previously pointed out that published reports indicated that, in general, persons at lower socio-economic levels belong to fewer formal associations. Membership in Parents and Teachers Association seems to follow the same general trend. Parents at the semi-skilled level in this study did not participate at all in the Association. There was increasing participation both in membership and attendance as the status level went up.

Farmers took part to only a limited extent in the organization of parents and teachers. The nature of their work and the fact that their residence was at some distance from the place of meeting might have had some bearing on their membership and attendance. The Parents and Teachers Association appears to have been dominated by the wives of skilled and minor white collar workers.

School grades are an important aspect of a child's progress through the educational system. Grades not only determine who receives scholastic honors but also influence a person's opportunity to continue into college. Grades may also help determine the type work one can obtain.

How did the parents in this study view school grades? To what extent did they express their opinions to their children? Some information which might assist in answering these questions is given in Tables 12 and 13. The parents were asked, "Have you talked to your son or daughter about school grades?" The seniors were asked,

"Have your father and mother discussed school grades with you?" Computation of chi square revealed that discussion of school grades by occupational category was not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level in either Table 12 or Table 13.[14] Differences could be accounted for by chance variation in twenty times in a hundred in Table 12 and about seventy times out of a hundred in Table 13.

In Table 12 there is not as definite a pattern as one might at first expect. If the thesis were accepted that parents in higher socio-economic levels take a greater interest in the school progress of their children and expected higher grades, one might anticipate that the parents in the white collar occupations would discuss grades to a greater extent than the parents in other categories. It can be seen that the proportion of the parents giving the response "very much" does not vary greatly from level to level. In fact, the highest proportion is found in the skilled classification. However, the semi-skilled

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS WHO TALKED TO SON OR DAUGHTER ABOUT SCHOOL GRADES

| | No or Very little | Some | Very much | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 30 | 36 | 34 | 47 |
| Father | 35 | 43 | 22 | 23 |
| Mother | 25 | 29 | 46 | 24 |
| Skilled | 24 | 37 | 39 | 41 |
| Father | 35 | 35 | 30 | 20 |
| Mother | 14 | 38 | 48 | 21 |
| Farmers | 35 | 31 | 34 | 68 |
| Father | 49 | 27 | 24 | 33 |
| Mother | 23 | 34 | 43 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 44 | 28 | 28 | 32 |
| Father | 62 | 19 | 19 | 16 |
| Mother | 25 | 37 | 37 | 16 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 3.553 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

14. In all tables where chi square was calculated, the totals for each socio-economic category were used in making the computations.

category had the largest proportion stating "no" or "very little" and the smallest proportion giving the response "very much."

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SENIORS WHO REPORTED PARENTS TALKED TO THEM ABOUT SCHOOL GRADES

| Occupation of father | Very little | | | Some | | | Very much | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | |
| White collar | 54 | 29 | 42 | 29 | 38 | 33 | 17 | 33 | 25 |
| Girls | 61 | 15 | | 31 | 38 | | 8 | 46 | |
| Boys | 30 | 0 | | 30 | 40 | | 40 | 60 | |
| Skilled | 45 | 9 | 27 | 27 | 50 | 39 | 27 | 41 | 34 |
| Girls | 58 | 17 | | 25 | 58 | | 17 | 25 | |
| Boys | 30 | | | 30 | 40 | | 40 | 60 | |
| Farmers | 47 | 28 | 38 | 35 | 37 | 36 | 17 | 34 | 26 |
| Girls | 64 | 40 | | 14 | 40 | | 22 | 20 | |
| Boys | 35 | 20 | | 50 | 35 | | 15 | 45 | |
| Semi-skilled | 41 | 24 | 32 | 59 | 53 | 56 | 0 | 24 | 12 |
| Girls | 60 | 30 | | 40 | 40 | | 0 | 30 | |
| Boys | 14 | 14 | | 86 | 71 | | 0 | 14 | |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 8.361 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

As will be shown later, the students at the upper levels generally received higher grades so it may not be so necessary for the parents to "keep after" their children about grades. For example, two parents in the white collar category responded "very little." The father remarked that he "had top compliments for his daughter." The mother said, "We would rather have her have some fun; we think she has done good work." The girl, in fact, was a member of the National Honor Society. She confirmed that the parents talked to her "very little" about grades, but stated, "They make me practice my music." She added that it was her brother that the parents "got after" about grades.

At the skilled level the parents probably realized the significance of grades and tried to impress their children, a number of whom were not especially concerned about studying, with the im-

portance of making good grades. The boys, particularly, were not inclined to be studious and the higher percentage of parents responding "very much" probably reflects the desire of these parents to keep the boy's grades up to average. A father of a boy who was not known for good grades stated, "I raise hell with him every once in a while about his grades."

The nearly 50 percent of the farm fathers responding "very little" probably reflected their lower interest in school and the attitude of not interfering too much with their children's lives. A few mothers and fathers giving this response were satisfied with the superior grades which their children were making.

At the semi-skilled and labor level, the high proportion of the fathers responding "no" or "very little" probably reflected the lack of knowledge, greater permissiveness, and lower expectations. One father who responded that he did not say anything about grades remarked, "I was not a valedictorian myself." Another father said, "No, that is their business. I hardly ever look at the grade card. I know no more than a pig about the grades today."

The two tables generally tend to confirm each other at the skilled and farmer levels with greater difference in the responses between parents and students in the white collar and semi-skilled categories. The students indicated somewhat less pressure than the parents suggested in that the proportion of students responding "no" or "very little" was greater at every level except the skilled, and the proportions responding "very much" were lower by the seniors at every level. In the proportions responding "very much," the same pattern as that of the parents was followed: the highest proportion was by the skilled, followed by the farmer and white collar with about the same figure, and then the semi-skilled category.

The large proportion of senior boys at the semi-skilled level who reported that their parents talked to them "some" about school grades was probably due to the fact that these boys generally received low grades and they were conscious of their parents' desires for them to obtain the minimum for passing. Some parents in this category were apparently not so much concerned that their children receive high marks as they were simply to have the children finish high school.

Sons and daughters of white collar workers reported the least pressure with 42 per cent giving the answer that their parents discussed school grades with them "none" or "very little." These figures

might be accounted for in that these students at the upper levels generally received higher grades and were probably closer to their parents' expectations so that there was less conflict over the school reports. The parents might be stressing and wanting high grades, but the students did not feel the pressure because they were fairly well meeting the parents' expectations.

The greater interest by the mothers in school progress was generally shown at every status level in Tables 12 and 13 except that a greater proportion of sons in the white collar classification in Table 13 reported "very much" for their fathers than for their mothers.

Additional information is available in that the students were interrogated as to who discussed grades more, the father or the mother. The responses are given in Table 14. Differences by socio-economic level were not significant at the 5 per cent level. In fact, chance variation would explain the differences about 70 per cent of the time. At every level it was indicated that the mother discussed school grades more. There were other sex differences between the

TABLE 14

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF PARENTS' DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL GRADES

| Occupation of father | About the same | Father more | Mother more | Did not ask | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 42 | 12 | 38 | 8 | 24 |
| Girls | 23 | 0 | 62 | 15 | 13 |
| Boys | 64 | 27 | 9 | 0 | 11 |
| Skilled | 32 | 14 | 54 | 0 | 22 |
| Girls | 25 | 17 | 58 | 0 | 12 |
| Boys | 40 | 10 | 50 | 0 | 10 |
| Farmers | 42 | 6 | 46 | 6 | 35 |
| Girls | 33 | 13 | 40 | 13 | 15 |
| Boys | 50 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 41 | 0 | 41 | 17 | 17 |
| Girls | 20 | 0 | 50 | 30 | 10 |
| Boys | 71 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 7 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 3.99 and was not significant at the 5 per cent level. In computing chi square omitted category "Did not ask."

responses of the boys and girls. In every category the girls stated that their mothers discussed scholastic matters with them more than did their fathers. Very few girls indicated that their fathers talked to them more about school marks. They did report one-fifth to one-third of their fathers talked "about the same" as the mothers.

Very few boys reported that their fathers talked to them more than did the mothers about grades. The boys, however, in larger proportions than the girls reported parents who talked "about the same." Only in the white collar classification was there a larger percentage of fathers as opposed to mothers who discussed school marks to a great extent. In no instance at the semi-skilled level was the father mentioned as talking about grades more than did the mother.

Did the parents do more than urge their children to make high grades? Were monetary inducements offered to the young persons for scholastic achievements? Table 15 indicates that relatively few parents rewarded their children in a material way for making good grades in high school. In all categories except skilled the proportion awarding material rewards was less than one-tenth; the portion in the skilled classification was 23 per cent. Computation of chi square revealed that differences by status category were not significant at the 5 per cent level with regard to rewards in high school but were significant at the 1 per cent level in past years in elementary or junior high school.

Money was the usual inducement given for scholastic achievement. However, one girl was given a diamond ring by an aunt, and several boys reported that they could have the use of a car. A number of students reported that they were complimented or given "a pat on the back"; however, compliments were not counted in the figures. More parents gave material gifts for good grades in the past —in elementary and possibly junior high school. The parents in the skilled category still tended more to give rewards than the white collar or the semi-skilled. Very few farm parents, only 6 per cent, were reported as giving some award for grades in a previous period.

The seniors whose fathers were in the skilled category reported more often than those whose parents were in other classifications that they were given material rewards for high grades at that time and in the past. Evidently these parents realized the importance of making high marks and wanted to encourage their children to obtain better grades.

TABLE 15

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS REPORTING MATERIAL REWARDS FOR SCHOOL GRADES

| Occupation of father | Recently | In the past | Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 8 | 33 | 24 |
| Skilled | 23 | 41 | 22 |
| Farmers | 6 | 6 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 6 | 24 | 17 |

(Recently) df - 3; $X^2$ - 4.97 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

(In past) df - 3; $X^2$ - 11.37 and is significant at the 1 per cent level.

The girls at the skilled level tended to be more specific as to the inducements given in the past. Instead of reporting money as most did who received rewards, they stated "if in top ten, $20," "50 cents for every S," and "$1 or something for every grade raised."

Children may be encouraged to earn high marks in school and they may be criticized or punished for receiving low grades. It can be seen from Table 16 that the mothers criticized the adolescents about grades more than did the fathers in every category except in the semi-skilled classification. The boys at this level mentioned reprimands by mothers and fathers in equal proportions. Boys reported more criticism than did girls at every level except by the mothers in the semi-skilled category. Apparently the boys who generally made lower grades than did the girls were urged to make higher ratings.

The percentage of seniors mentioning criticisms by their parents was about the same at each level except in the skilled category, which exceeded the others by some 20 per cent. Both boys and girls in the skilled classification reported reprimands in more instances than did students in any other category. Computation of chi square revealed that the differences by status category were significant at the 5 per cent level.

TABLE 16

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS REPORTING CRITICISM AT HOME FOR NOT MAKING GOOD GRADES

| Occupation of father | Percentage Father | Percentage Mother | | Number Father | Number Mother | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 38 | 46 | 42 | 24 | 24 | 48 |
| Girls | 31 | 38 | | 13 | 13 | |
| Boys | 45 | 55 | | 11 | 11 | |
| Skilled | 59 | 73 | 66 | 22 | 22 | 44 |
| Girls | 42 | 67 | | 12 | 12 | |
| Boys | 80 | 80 | | 10 | 10 | |
| Farmers | 38 | 49 | 44 | 35 | 34 | 69 |
| Girls | 14 | 20 | | 15 | 14 | |
| Boys | 55 | 70 | | 20 | 20 | |
| Semi-skilled | 35 | 47 | 41 | 17 | 17 | 34 |
| Girls | 30 | 50 | | 10 | 10 | |
| Boys | 43 | 43 | | 7 | 7 | |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 7.8 and is significant at the 5 per cent level.

Table 17 indicates that from one-fifth to one-fourth of the seniors reported punishment at home for "bad" grades. Boys stated in slightly larger proportions than girls in every category except in the white collar classification that there was punishment by parents. Boys usually receive lower marks than girls so are likely pressed to make better ones. There was only a small difference in percentage points between occupational levels except for the skilled category which had the highest percentage reporting punishment. Differences by status classification were not significant at the 5 per cent level. Differences could be accounted for ninety-five times out of a hundred by chance variation.

Most punishment consisted of remaining in at night. Some seniors were directed to bring their books home to study. Several adolescents in the skilled classification were "threatened" with being forced to stay in at night unless the grades were raised.

TABLE 17

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS REPORTING PUNISHMENT AT HOME FOR NOT MAKING GOOD GRADES OR FOR MAKING LOW GRADES

| Occupation of Father | % | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White collar | 21 | 24 |
| Girls | 23 | 13 |
| Boys | 18 | 11 |
| Skilled | 27 | 22 |
| Girls | 25 | 12 |
| Boys | 30 | 10 |
| Farmers | 20 | 35 |
| Girls | 13 | 15 |
| Boys | 25 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 24 | 17 |
| Girls | 20 | 10 |
| Boys | 29 | 7 |

df - 3; $X^2$ - .46 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

The encouragement to do well in school and the insistence that students maintain high marks evidences interest by parents in the educational progress of their children. High scholastic standing may be required for admittance to college. To what extent was college attendance a part of the plans and hopes of these parents for their children? Table 18 indicates the parents' beliefs concerning their children's future after graduating from high school. Differences by occupational category were significant beyond the 1 per cent level. There was very little likelihood that the differences could be explained by chance variation. As the socio-economic level went up parents stated that they thought their children should attend college. While about three-fourths of the fathers and mothers at the white collar level recommended additional schooling, only a little more than one-fifth in the semi-skilled category recommended college for their children.

As the occupational level went down, an increasing proportion of the parents gave the response, "What he wants, is up to him." One-

TABLE 18

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WHAT PARENTS THINK THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD DO AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

| Occupation | Go to college | | | What he wants | | | Don't know & other responses | | | Go to work | | | Number | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother |
| White collar | 70 | 79 | 74 | 22 | 17 | 19 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | | 23 | 24 |
| Girls | 67 | 85 | | 25 | 15 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 12 | 13 |
| Boys | 73 | 73 | | 18 | 18 | | 17 | 9 | | 0 | 0 | | 11 | 11 |
| Skilled | 40 | 62 | 51 | 30 | 14 | 22 | 25 | 19 | 22 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 21 |
| Girls | 27 | 67 | | 36 | 8 | | 17 | 16 | | 9 | 8 | | 11 | 12 |
| Boys | 56 | 56 | | 22 | 22 | | 22 | 22 | | 0 | 0 | | 9 | 9 |
| Farmers | 36 | 57 | 47 | 52 | 37 | 43 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0 | | 33 | 35 |
| Girls | 29 | 53 | | 57 | 40 | | 14 | 7 | | 0 | 0 | | 14 | 15 |
| Boys | 42 | 60 | | 47 | 30 | | 10 | 10 | | 0 | 0 | | 19 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 19 | 25 | 22 | 75 | 32 | 53 | 6 | 18 | 12 | 0 | 25 | 12 | 16 | 16 |
| Girls | 20 | 30 | | 70 | 10 | | 10 | 20 | | 0 | 40 | | 10 | 10 |
| Boys | 17 | 17 | | 83 | 67 | | 0 | 17 | | 0 | 0 | | 6 | 6 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 29.43 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.
In computing chi square combined categories, "Don't know" and "Go to work."

half of the semi-skilled parents had a permissive attitude with regard to their children attending college; less than one-fourth of the white collar parents had this attitude. As will be set forth later, practically all white collar parents expected their children to go to college.

Other responses to this question were "Don't know," "Will go to work," and "Will marry." All occupational categories other than white collar had a sizable proportion of parents with these responses. In other words, the white collar parents tended to give a more definite answer. About one-fourth of the skilled and semi-skilled categories were in the other responses.

Differences in opinions by parents by sex regarding higher education for their children were evidenced at every socio-economic level. In each category a larger proportion of mothers than fathers stated that the children should go to college. On the other hand, the fathers at each status level were more permissive than the wives in regard to what the offspring should do after graduation from high school. Also, in general, a higher percentage of mothers wanted their daughters to go to college than was true of their wishes for sons. A reversal took place in the desires of the fathers. At most levels a larger proportion of the fathers stated that the sons should attend college than said that the daughters should enter higher educational institutions.

After receiving answers to a question inquiring what the parents thought their children should do after graduation from high school, the fathers and mothers were asked specifically about higher education, "What do you think about your son (or daughter) going to college?" The responses are summarized in Table 19, and computation of chi square gives a value which is significant beyond the 1 per cent level. An extremely high significance is represented by the value obtained. There is very little likelihood that the differences in response can be accounted for by chance variation.

Table 18 and 19 are somewhat similar. However, there is an important difference between them. Table 18 relates to what the parents thought that the offspring *should* do after getting out of high school. Table 19 is concerned specifically with higher education. What did the adults think of the sons and daughters going to college? Was college attendance encouraged? In comparing Tables 18 and 19, an increased percentage of parents in the white collar and

skilled categories encouraged their children to go to college (compared with what they thought the seniors *should do*), while there was a smaller proportion at the other two levels who encouraged their offspring to enter higher education, a slight decrease by the farmers and a larger decrease at the semi-skilled level.

Inspection of Table 19 indicates that there was an increased proportion of parents who encouraged their children to attend college as the status level rose. Fifty per cent or more at every level except semi-skilled said that they encouraged their sons and daughters to continue their schooling. As the socio-economic position declined, there was an increase in the proportion of adults who were permissive toward higher education and who mentioned the problem of securing finances to send the young people to college.

Only 6 per cent of the parents in the semi-skilled classification stated that they would encourage their children to attend college. Fifty-three per cent indicated that it would be up to the sons or daughters what they should do after finishing high school Thirty-four per cent mentioned the financial difficulties of [illegible] children through college. Some persons in this category apparently thought that their children should go to college but were not going to encourage them because of lack of finances. Some answers by the semi-skilled indicating permissiveness were: "Let her make up her own mind," "Would like for her to go to college but it would be her choice," and "It's up to her." Responses indicating the financial problem were: "If she could work her way through," "We are not set up to put her through," "We are not qualified to send," "As far as can send him," and "Will not be able to rake up what it takes."

About one-third of the farm parents were permissive in their views on college education for their children. Typical of these replies were: "Leave up to her," "Would not try to force if he did not want to go," and "Have not encouraged college, she does not want." The lack of financial resources necessary to send children to college was also felt by some farmers. One father said, "If a person had the means, it would be all right. I don't think poor kids have the choice to go." The mother commented, "Would like for her to go but do not see any financial way to swing it."

TABLE 19

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WH PARENTS THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN GOIN TO COLLEGE

| Occupation | Encourage Father | Mother | | What he wants Father | Mother | | Problem financing co Father | Mot | | Other responses Father | Mother | | Number Father | Mother | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 78 | 88 | 83 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | | 22 | 8 | 15 | 23 | 24 | 47 |
| Girls | 83 | 92 | | 0 | 8 | | 0 | 0 | | 16 | 0 | | 12 | 13 | |
| Boys | 73 | 82 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 27 | 18 | | 11 | 11 | |
| Skilled | 60 | 71 | 66 | 15 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 28 | 24 | 20 | 21 | 41 |
| Girls | 36 | 67 | | 27 | 0 | | 9 | 0 | | 27 | 33 | | 11 | 12 | |
| Boys | 89 | 78 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 11 | 22 | | 9 | 9 | |
| Farmers | 45 | 54 | 50 | 36 | 29 | 32 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 33 | 35 | 68 |
| Girls | 28 | 47 | | 43 | 27 | | 7 | 13 | | 21 | 14 | | 14 | 15 | |
| Boys | 58 | 63 | | 32 | 32 | | 11 | 5 | | 0 | 5 | | 19 | 20 | |
| Semi-skilled | 6 | 6 | 6 | 50 | 56 | 53 | 44 | 25 | 34 | 0 | 13 | 6 | 16 | 16 | 32 |
| Girls | 0 | 0 | | 60 | 50 | | 40 | 30 | | 0 | 20 | | 10 | 10 | |
| Boys | 17 | 17 | | 33 | 67 | | 50 | 17 | | 0 | 0 | | 6 | 6 | |

df - 9; $X^2$ - 84.019 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent leve

Table 20 gives the seniors' conceptions of the view their parents had of their going to college. Differences in responses of students by occupational classification are statistically significant beyond the 1 per cent level. Table 20 follows the same general pattern as Table 19 which gives the responses of the parents. There was greater encouragement to attend college as the socio-economic status rose. There was greater permissiveness as the socio-economic level declined.

The students at all levels reported slightly greater encouragement to attend college than parental responses in Table 19 indicated. The greatest increase was at the semi-skilled level. A greater proportion of mothers in all classifications except for the skilled category was reported to have given more stimulation to enroll in higher educational institutions than did the fathers.

The parents were asked a general question about education in addition to those directed specifically at their own children: "About how much schooling does a young person need these days to get

TABLE 20

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' REACTION TO COLLEGE ATTENDANCE AS REPORTED BY STUDENTS

| Occupation of father | Encourages college | | | Not said much about Leave up to me | | | Number | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | |
| White collar | 88 | 96 | 92 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 24 | 24 | 48 |
| Girls | 92 | 100 | | 8 | 0 | | 13 | 13 | |
| Boys | 82 | 91 | | 18 | 9 | | 11 | 11 | |
| Skilled | 73 | 73 | 73 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 22 | 22 | 44 |
| Girls | 50 | 67 | | 42 | 0 | | 12 | 12 | |
| Boys | 100 | 80 | | 0 | 20 | | 10 | 10 | |
| Farmers | 41 | 63 | 52 | 59 | 37 | 48 | 34 | 35 | 69 |
| Girls | 29 | 60 | | 71 | 40 | | 14 | 15 | |
| Boys | 50 | 65 | | 50 | 35 | | 20 | 20 | |
| Semi-skilled | 35 | 47 | 41 | 65 | 53 | 59 | 17 | 17 | 34 |
| Girls | 40 | 60 | | 60 | 40 | | 10 | 10 | |
| Boys | 28 | 28 | | 71 | 71 | | 7 | 7 | |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 31.523 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

along in the world?" Responses to this question are listed in Table 21. As the socio-economic status went up there was an increase in the proportion of parents recommending a college degree.

It might be pointed out that in compiling Table 21 some answers were particularly difficult to classify since the respondents might answer: "at least high school," "high school and more if can get," and "college if able." Student reactions to the same question asked the parents: "About how much schooling does a young person need these days to get along well in the world?" are given in Table 22.

A pattern of replies was obtained somewhat similar to that of Table 21 which gives the parents' responses to the same question. As the socio-economic level rose there was an increase in the percentage of students recommending college training. As the socio-economic level went down there was an increase in the proportion of students recommending high school. In Tables 21 and 22 calculation of chi square gave values which were significant beyond the 1 per cent level. There was very little likelihood that the differences in either table could be accounted for by chance variation.

At the white collar and skilled levels the students recommended college (some college or college degree) slightly stronger than the parents did. The farm parents recommended college education slightly more than the farm children. At the semi-skilled level the parents (.50) indicated a stronger preference for the necessity of college than did the seniors (.29).

The differences in views between parents and children on the need for higher education are small except at the semi-skilled level. Many children at the semi-skilled level were working and earning money. They did not like school particularly and did not see the necessity for further education. They already had more formal education than their parents obtained. The parents probably could see that their positions were not so high as they might have been with more education. They realized to an extent, at least, that college education was needed for higher socio-economic position.

TABLE 21

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' BELIEF OF THE NEED FOR EDUCATION TODAY TO "GET ALONG" WELL

| Occupation | High school Father | Mother | | Some college Father | Mother | | College degree Father | Mother | | Other Father | Mother | | Number Father | Mother | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 17 | 13 | 15 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 48 | 54 | 51 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 23 | 24 | 47 |
| Skilled | 50 | 19 | 34 | 20 | 43 | 32 | 25 | 38 | 32 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 21 | 41 |
| Farmers | 49 | 49 | 49 | 30 | 23 | 26 | 21 | 28 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 35 | 68 |
| Semi-skilled | 56 | 44 | 50 | 31 | 50 | 41 | 13 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 16 | 32 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 23.67 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.
In computing chi square omitted category "Other."

TABLE 22

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' BELIEF OF THE NEED FOR EDUCATION TODAY TO "GET ALONG" WELL

| Occupation of father | High school | Some college | College degree | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 8 | 50 | 38 | 24 |
| Girls* | 8 | 46 | 38 | 13 |
| Boys | 9 | 55 | 36 | 11 |
| Skilled | 27 | 36 | 36 | 22 |
| Girls | 33 | 25 | 42 | 12 |
| Boys | 20 | 50 | 30 | 10 |
| Farmers | 57 | 26 | 17 | 35 |
| Girls | 53 | 40 | 7 | 15 |
| Boys | 60 | 15 | 25 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 71 | 29 | 0 | 17 |
| Girls | 80 | 20 | 0 | 10 |
| Boys | 57 | 43 | 0 | 7 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 24.06 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

* One response of girl in white collar category not classified.

The mothers and fathers in the upper socio-economic classification took a greater interest in school affairs by participating in the organization of parents and teachers than did the parents at other levels. Of crucial importance was the stimulation of sons and daughters to go to college. As the status went up, the parents not only put a higher value on college education but further stated that they encouraged their children to enter college.

The fathers and mothers at the semi-skilled level placed a lower value on higher education than other parents and were permissive toward their children attending college. The young people could go if they so desired and could earn their way. The parents did not see the advantages of further education, nor did they see the possibility of their children going to college. Higher education might be desirable for some persons, but it was not in the picture for their children.

The attitudes and values of the parents in great degree was reflected in the opinions of the sons and daughters. As the socio-eco-

nomic status rose, seniors placed a higher value on education and reported more pressure by their parents to continue their schooling. The children, as well as the parents, in the white collar category attached more importance to formal education. The youth in this classification reported that the parents encouraged them to attend college. At the semi-skilled level, the youth and their parents deemed higher education of lesser importance. The children indicated that the fathers and mothers did not urge them to continue their education.

With the attitudes of the parents and the adoption of similar views by the students, it is no surprise that youth at the white collar level attended college in larger proportions than did those in the semi-skilled category.

## PARENTS' ATTITUDES: OCCUPATION

*In our society young people have a "free" choice of occupation.* They are not legally bound to any job or vocation. The father's position, however, serves as a starting place for his son. Since occupation is one of the important determinants of social position, the type of work of the father has consequences for the position of his children. Some families have the financial means to provide higher education or to establish their children in business, while other families do not have these resources. Of very great importance also are values and attitudes which are transmitted to the children. High aspirations and the motivations to achieve may be passed on in some families and not in others.

What attitudes do persons at different status levels have toward their jobs? What plans do parents have for the occupational future of their children? Do they encourage their children to aspire to a high position? Do they expect their children to occupy the same socio-economic status as they do, or do they expect the children to rise to a higher level? A discussion of the beliefs and attitudes of the parents about occupation and the vocational possibilities of their children follows. Data bearing on the following proposition concerning parents are presented:

> Proposition 3. Parents at higher status levels will expect their children to enter higher status occupations. tions.

To what extent are men satisfied with their work? Table 23 gives the responses to the question, "Are you satisfied with the job you have, or would you like to have a different kind of job?" Inspection of the table indicates that as the socio-economic level went up there was greater satisfaction with the work, and as the socio-economic level decreased there was greater dissatisfaction with the means of earning a livelihood. Chance variation would not likely explain the differences in attitudes between status levels since computation of chi square gave a value which was significant at the 5 per cent level.

With higher prestige positions and, in general, with larger incomes, the fathers at the white collar level overwhelmingly expressed their liking for their work. Four-fifths in the skilled category and three-fourths of the farmers gave a similar response. Fewer than half of the workers at the semi-skilled level were pleased with their jobs. The semi-skilled and laboring worker had to do the heavy, dirty work, and he also received a smaller wage; it is not surprising, therefore, to find many of these persons dissatisfied with their positions.

TABLE 23

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FATHERS SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS

| Occupation | | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White collar | 87 | 23 |
| Skilled | 80 | 20 |
| Farmers | 76 | 33 |
| Semi-skilled | 44 | 16 |

df - 3; $X^2$ - 9.1 and is significant at the 5 per cent level.

The three fathers in the white collar category who were unhappy with their jobs gave three different reasons for being dissatisfied. One father doing clerical work did not like this type of work and hated especially the government reports he had to fill out. During the year he switched jobs and began to operate a cafe. Another father "would like to be making a little more money." The third father, a clerk, thought his job was a little "too easy." He previously had

been manager of a grocery store and had had to work harder physically and mentally. He had supervised several employees. He had no one to supervise in his present job, and the work was routine. Possibly, his present position was lower in status than the old one.

The three fathers in the skilled category who indicated that they were not satisfied with their jobs gave varied reasons. One would like to be "in the field as a representative of the company." Another said: "At my age would prefer something else; it is hard to get up and down." The third would "just as soon be doing something else" but it is "hard to change." Several others who reported that they were satisfied, qualified this judgment by saying: "I like the job but would like to be situated better so would not have to work so many hours;" "It is the best I can do;" and "Am at the age would not do me any good to try to do something else." One "sometimes wished for a better education so could better myself."

The farmers' objections to farming were primarily financial, and there was the wish for better things. "If there were anything in it, would be satisfied;" "If had a good job would be better off; am satisfied with the work if could make both ends meet." One farmer [illegible] something else." One stated, "If I had it to do over again, I would take mechanical engineering."

At the semi-skilled level the fathers complained principally about the pay: "Wages are not very high; the work is all right;" and "It just don't pay enough; there is no chance for advancement." One father worked nights; the same work in the day would be all right. One would "d'ruther go out on the farm."

Relatively few men in the white collar and skilled categories complained about their occupations. Some farmers who were suffering under lower farm prices at this time voiced some complaints. Half the men at the semi-skilled level were not satisfied with their jobs. The chief criticism was the income received. The pay of these workers was less than that of most other men interviewed. It was apparent by the interviewer that the laborers lived in less pretentious houses and owned fewer and less expensive house furnishings. It might be expected that these fathers would feel the need for more money.

The satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs was reflected

TABLE 24

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS WANTING THE SON (SON-IN-LAW) TO FOLLOW THE FATHER'S OCCUPATION

| Occupation | Yes | | | No | | | Don't know Makes no diff. | | | Let him choose | | | Number | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother |
| White collar | 30 | 45 | 38 | 57 | 45 | 51 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 23 | 24 |
| (Son-in-law) | 17 | 23 | | 67 | 69 | | 17 | 9 | | 0 | 0 | | 12 | 13 |
| (Son) | 45 | 73 | | 45 | 18 | | 0 | 0 | | 9 | 9 | | 11 | 11 |
| Skilled | 15 | 33 | 24 | 75 | 57 | 66 | 5 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 21 |
| (Son-in-law) | 0 | 17 | | 82 | 67 | | 9 | 17 | | 9 | 0 | | 11 | 12 |
| (Son) | 33 | 56 | | 67 | 44 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 9 | 9 |
| Farmers | 36 | 26 | 31 | 48 | 42 | 46 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 26 | 18 | 33 | 35 |
| (Son-in-law) | 14 | 20 | | 57 | 40 | | 7 | 7 | | 22 | 3 | | 14 | 15 |
| (Son) | 53 | 30 | | 42 | 45 | | 5 | 5 | | 0 | 20 | | 19 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 0 | 19 | 9 | 75 | 56 | 66 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 16 | 16 |
| (Son-in-law) | 0 | 30 | | 60 | 40 | | 30 | 20 | | 10 | 10 | | 10 | 10 |
| (Son) | 0 | 0 | | 100 | 83 | | 0 | 17 | | 0 | 0 | | 6 | 6 |

df - 9; $X^2$ - 22.801 and is significant at the 1 per cent level.

only in part in the desire of the fathers at different socio-economic levels for their sons to follow in the father's occupation. The parents were asked, "Would you want your son to follow the same occupation you do?" In phrasing this question, the words "son-in-law" were used when the parents had a daughter, and the wives were asked in reference to their husbands' occupations. The responses are given in Table 24. Differences in replies by occupational categories are significant at the 1 per cent level. Chance variation does not account for the differences in responses.

Fewer than half of the parents wanted their children to follow in the same occupation as their fathers'. The parents in the white collar category had the largest percentage approving their sons or sons-in-law taking up the fathers' vocations. Next in order were the farmers, who might be expected to have a high continuity in family occupation. Farming traditionally has been handed down from father to son. The farm children are taught to work at an early age and feel that this is one occupation they understand. The farm machinery can be bequeathed to one or more children. However, only about one-third of the farm parents were desirous that their children become farmers. The farm parents had the largest proportion who were permissive to allowing their children to choose their own occupations.

The parents in the semi-skilled classification had the lowest percentage desiring the children to follow in the fathers' footsteps. The three favorable responses were by mothers in regard to their prospective sons-in-law. A sizeable proportion of semi-skilled responses were "don't know" or "makes no difference."

At the professional and managerial level, the fathers were more inclined to favor the son following in the fathers' occupation or to be pleased if the son would take up the fathers' vocation. At the minor white collar level, such as clerical workers, there was a greater tendency for the fathers not to want the son to enter the fathers' occupations.

The reasons given by the white collar parents for not wanting the son or son-in-law to follow the father's occupations were varied. Some answers indicated a desire for improvement—"Hope son-in-law has a better education and follows something other than ——;" "It's a blind alley job;" "With education could do better;" and "Not enough future in it." Some other responses were "Been a lot of hard work;" "Easier way to make a living;" and "Not very much time at

home." One or two fathers commented that "Times have changed; the small fellow is crowded out."

The responses among the skilled for not wanting the sons to follow the fathers' work tended more to emphasize the conditions of work: "Too dirty;" "Not healthy;" "It is too dirty a job;" "A hard job;" "There is easier ways to earn a living;" and "My job is too hazardous." A few responses indicated a desire for advancement; "He would be better educated;" "Just a mechanic, would prefer a little more;" "Better fields with more money;" and "It is a headache and not much chance for advancement."

The farmers not wanting the sons to follow farming tended to point out the difficulties of getting started in farming today and the poor economic conditions. "Takes too much to start;" "It takes finances to start;" "Farming is not what is used to be;" and "Not the way conditions are today;" "Too much of a gamble;" "Would starve to death;" and "Too long hours for the returns." Not many parents suggested the possibility for advancement. One mother did say "Today, need to be a banker, lawyer, a college graduate." During the period when the interviews were made, farm prices were down, and some farmers tended to be discouraged.

The parents in the semi-skilled category realized the hard work involved in their jobs. "Too God dang long hours;" "Pretty rough deal;" "Too rough;" "It is dangerous;" "I had it the rough way;" "Has not been too good for me and looks like it will get worse;" "Just ain't no future in the occupation I have to do;" and "Like Claude and me, hard work is about all we can do. I would hate to see anyone follow in my footsteps."

A few semi-skilled parents hoped for advancement for their children. The father's job was "not enough pay and not much chance for advancement." One father stated that he hoped the son would do "a little better, that is why I am getting him through high school," and "Don't make enough money; he can get something that will be easier and draw more pay."

Except for the farmers there was an increase in the proportion of parents wanting their sons to follow in the fathers' occupations as the socio-economic level rose. However, even in the white collar category less than half of the parents desired the sons to enter the fathers' positions. A large proportion at each socio-economic level did not want the sons to take up the fathers' work. The chief objection seemed to be economic. Apparently many parents had the

wish that the sons rise in status and enter work which would have greater economic rewards or have more opportunity for advancement.

To what extent did the seniors want to continue in their fathers' occupational position? The boys were asked, "Would you like to follow your father's occupation?" The girls were asked, "Would you want your husband to follow your father's occupation?" Table 25 contains the responses by status level. Calculation of chi square gave a value which was significant at the 5 per cent level. There was good likelihood that the differences by vocational class could not be accounted for by chance variation. A larger proportion of farm youth preferred to follow in the occupations of their fathers than did children at any other socio-economic level. Farming is an occupation which is traditionally handed down through the family.

TABLE 25

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS WANTING TO FOLLOW FATHERS' OCCUPATION AND OF GIRLS WANTING THEIR HUSBANDS TO FOLLOW FATHERS' OCCUPATION

| Occupation of father | No | Yes, to some extent very much | Don't know makes no difference | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 62 | 21 | 17 | 24 |
| Girls | 54 | 15 | 31 | 13 |
| Boys | 73 | 27 | 0 | 11 |
| Skilled | 54 | 24 | 22 | 22 |
| Girls | 50 | 8 | 41 | 12 |
| Boys | 60 | 40 | 0 | 10 |
| Farmers | 37 | 54 | 9 | 35 |
| Girls | 33 | 47 | 20 | 15 |
| Boys | 40 | 60 | 0 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 78 | 24 | 6 | 17 |
| Girls | 80 | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| Boys | 71 | 28 | 0 | 7 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 14.6 and is significant at the 5 per cent level.

At most socio-economic levels, a considerable percentage of the girls were willing to leave the choice of their husband's occupation to the husband or asserted that it made no difference to them what their husbands did. Thirty-three per cent of the skilled, 22 per cent of the white collar, and 20 per cent of the farm girls gave this response.

The highest proportion of the seniors stating that they did not want to follow in the father's occupation was at the semi-skilled level, followed by the white collar, and skilled.

The reasons advanced by the boys in the white collar category for not desiring to follow in the father's occupation seemed to be personal inclinations of not liking the work: "A lot of pressure on you; I do not want to work with the mass of people;" "Just do not like that kind of work;" "Lord no; do not see myself behind a desk pushing a pencil;" "Would rather be something else, I reckon;" "There are other things I would rather do."

The daughters of white collar workers objected to their future husbands following their fathers' work: "A person should do that job which is best suited for him;" "It is not too clean work;" "Just do not like the beer business;" and "It is so irregular." One girl thought that her husband "could find something better."

The sons and daughters of skilled workers tended to reflect some parents' attitudes for not wanting to follow in the father's job. The reasons were primarily concerned with the conditions of work: "Work around the clock," "Get up in the middle of the night;" "Irregular hours makes him cross;" "It is a dirty job, there is always grease, kinda dangerous," "Electric work scares me." One boy reported that he did not care for the work. One girl stated that it "pays too little."

The farm boys not wanting to go into farming gave varied reasons: "Hardly any time off; there is something to do all the time;" three boys had no reason except to go into another occupation (lawyer, veterinarian); one boy would rather do something else, "cannot make much money farming." Two boys did not like the work: "Do not care for it" and "Not fond of farming."

One farm girl said that her "boy friend does not like the farm." Another one stated that she would not want her husband to be a farmer "unless he likes it like my father did." Another girl said that she did not want her husband to be a "big farmer" like her father, who had too much to do.

At the semi-skilled level the boys who did not prefer to follow the vocation of their fathers gave reasons concerned with the work or pay renumeration. "Does not pay enough;" "Not good paying job; work at different hours;" "Do not like it—too dirty and everything;" "Do not like the smell of milk;" and "Never did like farming."

The girls at the semi-skilled level had somewhat the same objections to their husbands doing the same work as their fathers. Conditions of work were noted: "It is too dangerous;" "Would not want him around on hot wires;" and "Has to lift heavy separators, would be too heavy." The pay was objected to by two girls: "He does not make too much money," and "It does not pay off."

The seniors tended to follow somewhat the same pattern as their parents with regard to entering their fathers' occupations, with a large proportion of the young people at each level not desiring to be in the fathers' work. In the white collar group the objections raised to entering the parents' vocations tended to be personal reasons of not liking the type of work. The young persons preferred white collar work but not the particular one in which the father was engaged.

At the skilled and semi-skilled levels and to some extent among the farm boys, the objections were the hard, dangerous work and the low pay. Apparently many young persons in these categories wished to enter an occupation above their fathers' in that the work would not be so physically difficult and hazardous, and the remuneration would be higher.

What possibility did the parents see for opportunities for income mobility? Table 26 presents the responses to the question: "Do you think that it is possible today for an ambitious young person to work himself up to a higher job—say $10,000?" The differences in response by occupational classification were significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

Only one father thought that it would not be possible for an ambitious young person to work himself up to $10,000 a year. A few parents did not know whether it could be done. In giving answers many parents gave qualifications so that it was difficult to place the responses. Some statements were: "Depends on what he was doing;" "If has ambition and zip;" "Fairly easy if had education;" and "If had more push than the average."

The parents in the white collar category had the highest per-

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DEGREE TO WHICH PARENTS THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR AN AMBITIOUS YOUNG PERSON TO WORK UP TO $10,000 A YEAR

| Occupation | Fairly easy | | | Difficult | | | Very difficult | | | Other | | | Number | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother | | Father | Mother |
| White collar | 44 | 21 | 31 | 39 | 38 | 38 | 13 | 38 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 23 | 24 |
| Skilled | 30 | 14 | 22 | 45 | 53 | 49 | 20 | 33 | 27 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 21 |
| Farmers | 18 | 5 | 12 | 49 | 54 | 51 | 30 | 32 | 31 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 33 | 35 |
| Semi-skilled | 6 | 13 | 10 | 38 | 12 | 25 | 56 | 75 | 65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 16 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 22.52 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.
In computing chi square omitted category "Other."

centage stating that they thought that it would be fairly easy for an ambitious young person to reach $10,000, and there was about a 10 per cent drop from each socio-economic level to the next lowest. One white collar mother said that it would be fairly easy if the person had "the right job and pull." A white collar father thought that it would be easy since he paid one of his men $400 per month.

At every level except the semi-skilled, the highest percentage was at the "difficult" response. The semi-skilled had the largest proportion at the "very difficult" response. Some answers of the semi-skilled were: "If I thought that it were easy, I would be working on it;" "That would be a big jump;" "Could work up but do not know if could reach $10,000;" "Can be done but not many do;" and "Pretty damned hard pull."

The parents were asked what occupations they wanted their children to enter and what occupations they expected them to enter. The results are given in Tables 27 and 28. The values of chi square in both tables were high and were significant beyond the 1 per cent level. There was very little likelihood that the differences between socio-economic categories could be explained by chance variation.

Most parents presumably were willing to give their children considerable latitude in choosing occupations. The parents in the white collar and farmer categories were the most liberal in this regard with about two-thirds stating that they would leave the decision of occupation to the children. Nearly half of the parents in the semi-skilled category and 37 per cent of the skilled category answered "What he wants;" "It's their choice," etc. The parents at the semi-skilled level had the highest percentage of "don't know" responses.

Although many parents answered "What he wants" or "Let him choose" to the question, "What occupation do you want your son (daughter) to enter?" they really did not mean that the child was free to select any occupation. In a few instances, to test the response, "What he wants," some parents were asked a hypothetical question, "What if your child said that he had considered many jobs and had finally reached a decision to become a ditch digger?" It was found that the parents did not want the child to become a ditch digger. The child should enter a "better" occupation. Presumably, the parents had a range of acceptable occupations, and the children should choose from among them.

TABLE 27
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES WHICH PARENTS WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO ENTER

| Occupation of Father | White Collar | Skilled | Farmer | Don't Know | What he Wants | Total No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 28 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 68 | 47 |
| Skilled | 44 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 37 | 41 |
| Farmers | 18 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 66 | 68 |
| Semi-skilled | 16 | 9 | 0 | 28 | 47 | 32 |

df - 9; $X^2$ - 27.78 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level.

A larger proportion of parents in the skilled category than at any other level wanted their children to go into white collar vocations. For the girls, the positions largely represented secretarial or office work rather than professional occupations. Next in order came the parents of white collar workers, farmers, and semi-skilled.

Only a few parents gave other responses. One parent in the skilled category desired a skilled occupation for his son. Two parents in the farmer category wanted their children in skilled vocations and two desired farming for their children. Three parents in the semi-skilled category preferred that their children go into skilled occupations.

TABLE 28
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES WHICH PARENTS EXPECTED THEIR CHILDREN TO ENTER

| Occupation of Father | White Collar | Skilled | Farmers | Married (Girls) | Don't Know | Other | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 47 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 49 | 0 | 47 |
| Skilled | 31 | 7 | 0 | 17 | 37 | 5 | 41 |
| Farmers | 25 | 10 | 15 | 3 | 35 | 11 | 68 |
| Semi-skilled | 9 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 70 | 3 | 32 |

df - 9; $X^2$ - 36.12 and is significant beyond the 1 per cent level. In computing chi square combined the categories, "Don't know" and "Other."

Table 28 indicates that a changed pattern of responses emerged when the parents were asked what occupations they *expected* their children to enter. Nearly half of the parents in the white collar category expected their children to go into white collar work and about half responded, "Do not know." In comparison with Table 27, there is an increase in the percentage expecting their children to enter white collar occupations only at the white collar level but there is a decrease in the proportion expecting white collar work at every other level—skilled, farmer, and semi-skilled.

Over two-thirds of the parents at the semi-skilled level responded, "Don't know." The problem to these parents might be characterized by the statement of one father who stated, "Lord, I don't know. I don't know if she knows or not."

To what extent was there communication between parents and children concerning occupations? The students were asked whether they had discussed their intended occupations with their mothers and fathers and with whom they had most discussed this subject. Calculation of chi square for the responses in Table 29 gave a value which is not significant at the 5 per cent level. It is likely that the responses by socio-economic level can be accounted for by chance variation. Most seniors at every level reported that they had discussed their desired vocations with their parents. The smallest proportion who stated that they had not talked about their intended occupations with their parents was at the white collar level and the highest percentage was at the semi-skilled level. More boys than girls stated that they had not discussed occupations at all with their parents in the white collar, skilled, and farmer categories.

The replies to the question with regard to the parent who talked most to the adolescents concerning occupation did not seem to form a pattern along socio-economic lines. The skilled and white collar categories had the smallest proportion talking to the father, and the farmer and semi-skilled classifications had the highest percentage talking to the father. Discussing occupation more with the mother were the seniors in the semi-skilled category, followed by the skilled, white collar, and farmers. The sons and daughters of white collar workers had the largest proportion discussing occupation "about the same" with both parents, followed by farmers, skilled, and semi-skilled categories.

As might be expected there was a difference between the boys

and girls as to which parent he or she discussed occupation with the most. The girls talked more with the mothers and the boys more with the fathers. The boys in the semi-skilled, skilled, and farmer categories had a higher percentage than the girls who discussed vocation "about the same" while in the white collar classification the girls in larger proportion talked about occupation about the same with either parent.

TABLE 29

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' ESTIMATE OF WHICH PARENT DISCUSSED INTENDED OCCUPATION MORE WITH THEM

| Occupation of father | Not discuss. | Father more | Mother more | About the same | Did not ask | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 8 | 8 | 29 | 54 | 0 | 24 |
| Girls | 0 | 0 | 38 | 62 | 0 | 13 |
| Boys | 18 | 18 | 18 | 45 | 0 | 11 |
| Skilled | 14 | 4 | 32 | 41 | 9 | 22 |
| Girls | 8 | 0 | 42 | 33 | 17 | 12 |
| Boys | 20 | 10 | 20 | 50 | 0 | 10 |
| Farmers | 14 | 17 | 22 | 46 | 0 | 35 |
| Girls | 7 | 7 | 47 | 40 | 0 | 15 |
| Boys | 20 | 25 | 5 | 50 | 0 | 20 |
| Semi-Skilled | 18 | 12 | 41 | 24 | 6 | 17 |
| Girls | 30 | 0 | 60 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Boys | 0 | 29 | 14 | 43 | 14 | 7 |

df - 9; $X^2$ - 7.9 and is not significant at the 5 per cent level.

In computing chi square combined the categories "Did not discuss" and "Did not ask."

The seniors reported that very few parents disapproved of their choice of future life work. Table 30 gives the seniors' responses to the question "Does your father (mother) approve of your choice of occupation?" Parents approval of seniors choices of occupation by status level was statistically significant at the 2 per cent level. A mother in the white collar category was reported as telling her daughter, "She believed I could do something better." A mother at

the skilled level while not disapproving of her daughter's selection did not think that the girl could make it (psychiatry). A farm girl said her mother did not have a good reason for disapproving of her intended occupation. "She thinks it would be too hard." A farm boy who wanted to be a truck driver stated that his parents did not approve of this choice. Another farm boy doubted that his mother would approve of his intended occupation, "She would think I could do something better."

TABLE 30

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' APPROVAL OF STUDENTS' CHOICE OF OCCUPATION

| Occupation of father | Yes | Number |
|---|---|---|
| White-collar | 77 | 48 |
| Skilled | 83 | 43 |
| Farmers | 81 | 72 |
| Semi-skilled | 53 | 34 |

df - 6; $X^2$ - 16.195 and is significant at the 2 per cent level.

At the semi-skilled level only about half the parents were reported as approving the seniors' choice of occupations. A fairly large percentage of the students' responses were: "Don't know;" "Does not say much about it;" or the question was not asked. Some students were not asked these questions, since they did not have a choice of occupation firmly established. Apparently there had been little planning or discussion of future occupations. When the children finished school, they would go out and find a job.

Fathers in the white collar classification liked their work in greater proportions than did those at other levels. There was greater dissatisfaction with the jobs at the lowest level. The men in the white collar category worked at jobs which had higher prestige and in general with higher monetary rewards. The conditions of employment were less fatiguing and amidst pleasant surroundings. The fathers at the semi-skilled level toiled at hard labor with low pay. The work tended to be dirty and sometimes dangerous. The prestige rewards were not great. Under these situations, it would be ex-

pected that persons at the higher level would tend to be more satisfied with their work than those at lower statuses.

Although fathers at the white collar level had greatest satisfaction in their work, they were not inclined to want their sons to follow the same occupation. In fact relatively few parents desired their sons to enter the same vocations as the fathers'. However, as the socio-economic level went down there was a decline in the percentage of parents who preferred that their sons follow in the fathers' footsteps.

Many young people did not want to follow the occupational model set by the father. As one might expect the strongest preference for taking up the father's work was by farm youth. The largest percentage not desiring to take up the vocation of the father was at the semi-skilled level.

In the white collar category the parents, although not overtly setting the occupational goals for their children, did have expectations that their sons and daughters would enter higher occupations since they did urge the children to attend college. At this level there was more planning for college and occupation. The parents were likely to make suggestions or to bring home material pertaining to vocations. The parents in the white collar classification were more likely to believe that it was possible for young persons to advance to higher income positions than did the parents at lower levels.

While the mothers and fathers in the semi-skilled classification were wishing that their sons would not follow in the same jobs as the fathers, they did not have definite plans for the occupational advancement of the children. The parents did not encourage their children to further their education beyond the high school. They hoped the boys would find a "good job," a position which was better than the father's. There was desire for social mobility, but this aspiration for upward movement was limited in that the educational level was limited.